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**Amendments to the Abstract:**

Please replace the existing abstract with the following amended abstract.

-- ~~The method and system of the present invention~~ provides a sequence of increasingly detailed presentation levels to assist a user in deciding whether a thread is of interest, ~~and, if so, presents the text of the threaded messages is presented at a~~ corresponding level of detail corresponding to in accordance with the user's level of indicated interest. In particular, the invention provides a method comprising creating a message collection viewing cascade including a plurality of viewing levels for presenting one or more message threads and abbreviated forms of one or more messages, abbreviating at least one of the messages using one of a plurality of abbreviation techniques, and formatting each abbreviated message to be displayed at one of the plurality of viewing levels in the message collection viewing cascade. Each abbreviation technique specifies a manner in which the messages can be abbreviated, and each viewing level in the collection viewing cascade offers a different degree of detail for presenting the abbreviated forms of the messages. --